



Commissioner's Column

APR Celebrates Silver Anniversary

By Douglas P. Gillespie

In November, I joined a host of organizations and public officials celebrating the 25 years that the Mass. Dept. of Food & Agriculture has been successfully preserving farmland through the APR program. Over 50,000 acres of prime agricultural land in 148 cities and towns across Massachusetts have been preserved by the program, through the investment of \$126 million in government funds.

One of the greatest assets of the APR program is the collaboration that has developed between farmers, land trusts, cities and towns, the state, and federal USDA agencies to ensure the preservation of this diminishing resource. So this Silver Anniversary is a salute to everyone, every partner who has played a role in making APR work in Massachusetts. I especially want to thank the numerous farm families, past and present, that have had the vision to participate in the APR program to preserve their land for the future of all of Massachusetts agriculture.

The fair market value of farmland continues to escalate; driven by the development pressures and sprawl that are engulfing our communities. APR plays an important role in taking valuable farmland off the wish list of developers and others, while helping to build strong farm businesses that bring taxes, jobs and quality of life to the community where they are situated.

Farmland is a bargain and a great benefit for our communities. Over and over it has been documented that residential development costs a community in services far more than the tax revenue that it generates. Farmland does not cost a community; in fact farmland taxes are a

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Veneman Declares Disaster for Mass. Counties

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Ann M. Veneman has designated 12 Massachusetts counties as agricultural disaster areas.

"This designation will allow producers to receive assistance to help them recover from adverse weather conditions," said Veneman.

These designations make all qualified farm operators eligible for low-interest emergency loans from the Farm Service Agency (FSA). Farmers in eligible counties have until mid-July 2003 to apply for the loans to help cover part of their actual losses. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. FSA has a

variety of programs available, in addition to the emergency loan program, to help eligible farmers recover from adversity.

With the exception of Nantucket and Suffolk counties, all other Massachusetts counties have received primary disaster designations due to drought losses. However, Nantucket and Suffolk counties are contiguous and are also eligible for emergency (EM) loans.

Interested farmers may contact their local FSA Service Centers for further information on eligibility requirements and application procedures for these and other programs. Additional information is also available online at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/disaster/assistance1.htm>. ♦

Specialty Foods Kiosk Opens at UMass Bookstore

Commissioner Doug Gillespie recently cut the ribbon on the first-ever Massachusetts Specialty Products Kiosk at the UMass Amherst bookstore. Students, faculty and visitors enjoyed samples of the locally produced foods to which they now have easy access.

All products in the kiosk are made by member companies of the Mass. Specialty Foods Association (www.msfa.net), which developed the attractively designed kiosk in cooperation with the UMass bookstore, and with support from DFA. The freestanding four-sided kiosk has space for products and brochures. It was designed to complement the newly renovated bookstore.

"The newly renovated UMass bookstore serves some 200,000 customers each year, many of whom are looking for quality snacks or distinctive gifts with local flavor," said Commissioner Gillespie. "The kiosk will help to develop a new market for local products."

"I like the tie in with Massachusetts agriculture and the Massachusetts Specialty Foods Association," said Phill Olsen, bookstore director. "We see lots of out-of-state visitors so this is a good opportunity to experience a bit of Massachusetts flavor and add to their UMass experience. We are also fortunate to



MSFA president Carol Coutrier joined Commissioner Gillespie as he cut the ribbon on the new kiosk.

have a clientele that is very supportive of local agriculture and products from small food companies."

"The MSFA is pleased to partner with the UMass bookstore in displaying and selling Massachusetts specialty foods," said Carol Coutrier, President Mass. Specialty Foods Assoc. "We're especially appreciative of Phill Olson's assistance and support." ♦

Agricultural Calendar Photo Contest Returns with Educational Twist

The Department of Food and Agriculture, in collaboration with Massachusetts Agriculture in the Classroom, Inc., announces the 2003 Massachusetts Agriculture Photo Contest. Winning photos will be featured in a new 18 month 2003/2004 Massachusetts Agriculture School Year Calendar to be published next summer.

Amateur photographers are invited to submit photographs of Massachusetts farms and agricultural products. Eighteen photos will be selected, one for each month. Photos will be selected that depict the diversity of agriculture and horticulture in the state throughout the year. Photographers must be Massachusetts residents.

Winning photographers will be credited in the calendar, invited to attend a winner's ceremony at the Eastern States Exposition (The Big E) in Springfield in September, and receive a basket of Massachusetts products.

Deadline for submissions is April 1, 2003. For contest rules and an entry form, contact, Rick LeBlanc, 508-792-7711, x17, Richard.LeBlanc@state.ma.us. ♦

New Mass. Specialty Foods Guide Published

Looking for fresh milled spices for a holiday recipe or English toffee for a favorite relative? A new booklet published by the Mass. Specialty Foods Assoc. is a great place to start your specialty foods quest. The 17 page *Massachusetts Specialty Foods Guide* lists the association's member companies, many of which are small family owned businesses...and all are local.

The guide includes makers of sparkling apple cider, organic jams, fruit spreads, blue cheese, sweetened dried cranberries, chocolates, biscotti, mustards, specialty nuts, coffees, Asian cooking sauces, salsa, pita chips, and more. For a free copy of the guide, call toll-free 800-813-5862, or e-mail ccourtrier@aol.com.

"There is an amazing variety of interesting, new and unusual products in the guide," said Bruce Mills, MSFA Vice President, and Vice President of Operations and Marketing at My Grandma's of New England, a Boston company featuring mail order gourmet, kosher, coffee cakes. "Why not support a producer in your own back yard? It's good for the local economy."

"The commitment to quality by our members is evident in the taste and innovation of their products," said Carol Coutrier, MSFA president. "The products featured in our guide epitomize the diversity and uniqueness of Massachusetts specialty foods."

Grants to Help Disadvantaged Farmers

The USDA Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) has announced the availability of grant funds and requests applications for the Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Competitive Grants Program (OASDFR). Applications must be received by close of business on January 31, 2003.

This program provides outreach and technical assistance to help socially disadvantaged farmers to own and operate farms, and to participate in agricultural programs. The OASDFR will support a wide range of outreach and assistance activities in farm management, financial management, marketing, application and bidding procedures, and other areas.

USDA defines a socially disadvantaged group as a group whose members have been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudices because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities.

To see the Request for Applications and an application form, go to <http://www.reeusda.gov/1700/funding/rfaasdf.htm> ♦

USDA to Measure Ag Land Values, Floriculture Crops

USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service will survey 700 floriculture producers in Connecticut and Massachusetts on their production this December and 1,300 farmers throughout New England on land value in January and February.

Over one-third of Massachusetts' agricultural cash receipts are generated by the greenhouse and nursery industry. Massachusetts average farm real estate value was \$7,200 per acre in 2001, well above the national average of \$1,210 per acre.

State and national floriculture statistics will be published in the annual Floriculture Crops 2002 Summary in April. Land value statistics will be released in the Agricultural Land Values Report in August. As with all NASS surveys, individual operator information is kept strictly confidential and is exempt from Freedom of Information Act requests.

NASS reports are available on the web at www.usda.gov/nass. ♦

DFA Export Specialist Receives National Award

DFA export specialist Bonita Oehlke was one of four members of the U.S. Organic Export Initiative Team, which recently received the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service's "Teamwork 2002" award in recognition of its work to promote U.S. organic products at foreign trade shows.

The team also coordinated reverse buyer missions to U.S. shows. Four state and regional trade groups, and the Organic Trade Association, are represented on the team. Bonita also received a Teamwork Award for the Japan Nursery Trade mission held in July, 2002. Awards were given in five categories to a total of 14 individuals. ♦

Quincy Farmers' Market Recognized

The Quincy City Council recently honored the Quincy Farmers' Market's participating farmers and its organizer, retired DFA employee Anneli Johnson, for the 20 years of continued operation.

The farms recognized were: Stillman Farm and Greenhouses, Scott Freitas Farm, Noquochoke Orchards, Hmong Farms of Lancaster, Serving Ourselves Farm of Boston, and George Parker Orchards of Westboro. Johnson believes that this could be the first time that a city council has honored farmers who serve Bay State communities every summer. ♦

Heath Maple Producer Wins International Award

The "Best Grade A Dark Amber Maple Syrup" award was presented to Girard's Sugarhouse of Heath, Mass. at an international competition in North Conway, New Hampshire on October 23. The North American Maple Syrup Council sponsors the annual contest.

Maple producers from 16 states and four provinces of Canada participated. Judging is based on color, clarity, density, and flavor. Mike Girard's syrup also earned the third place ribbon for Grade A Medium Amber.

Mike is a 25-year member of the Mass. Maple Producers Assoc. He is treasurer of the North American Maple Syrup Council Research Fund. Over the years his syrup and his photos of maple sugaring have received recognition on the international, regional and local levels. ♦

Community Farm Publishes Picture Book

The Natick Community Organic Farm has published a new picture book for children. "A Year at the Farm" is a 40 page, full color, paperback book that teaches children about the cycles of production on the farm.

The book is organized by season. Maple sugaring, starting seedlings, birthing of baby animals, transplanting, planting, sheep shearing, bee keeping, daily chores, harvesting and cover cropping are all included.

Carol A. Krentzman of Natick has written the book with humorous experiences interwoven with facts. Illustrations are by Helen M. Salzberg, a well-known folk artist from New York City. The artist and author both donated their work, and the farm also received funding from DFA and local donations. Proceeds from book sales go directly to NCOF programs and outreach.

"A Year at the Farm" is available at Natick Community Organic Farm, 117 Eliot Street, Natick, for \$10, and by mail-order for \$12 to cover postage. More information is available on the web at www.natickfarm.org. ♦

Winter Flower Growers' Meeting - Jan. 21

All commercial flower growers are invited to attend the Winter Flower Growers Meeting on January 21, 9:30 am to 4:00 pm at FAF Growers, Hinsdale Rd., Northfield, Mass. The meeting is co-sponsored by UMass Extension Floriculture Program and the Mass. Flower Growers' Assoc.

The program will begin with a demonstration on respirator fit testing. Growers are invited to bring their respirators for a fit test. Other topics will include Root Rots and Subdue Resistance, Managing Fungus Gnats, Growing New Seed Varieties, Growth Regulators for Spring Crops, Marketing Tips and more. Three pesticide recertification credits have been approved.

FAF is a wholesale greenhouse and retail garden center with three acres of greenhouse production and seven acres of fall outdoor container production. They specialize in plugs, rooted liners, pre-finished and finished annuals and herbaceous perennials. You will have an opportunity to see how FAF over winters their perennials during the lunchtime tour.

Contact: Tina Smith 413-545-5306, tsmith@umext.umass.edu, Paul Lopes 508-295-2212 x24, lopes@umext.umass.edu, or Bob Luczai, 781-275-4811. ♦

FSMIP Grant Proposals Due Jan. 31st

Proposals are now being accepted for Year 2003 grants to be awarded through the USDA Federal-State Market Improvement Program (FSMIP). The deadline for proposal submissions to the Department of Food and Agriculture is January 31st.

FSMIP grants are awarded to agricultural organizations for market development, market research, and marketing education projects.

Massachusetts received two grants totaling over \$62,000 this past year. One grant project will initiate a Massachusetts "Buy Local" private school foodservice program with the assistance of the Pioneer Valley Growers Association and the other will develop a Bay Scallop aquaculture program with the Wampanaug Native American Tribe on Martha's Vineyard.

This USDA Federal grant program is administered through state departments of agriculture. For more information and/or a copy of guidelines, contact Mary Jordan at 617-626-1750 or e-mail Mary.Jordan@state.ma.us. ♦

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huge gain for a community. We need to continue to let those facts be known, and to expand the partnership with cities and towns using the Community Preservation Act as a cost-sharing tool.

Moving into the 21st Century, we must strengthen the APR program, and move more aggressively to preserve the land essential to the survival of our family farms! We cannot only devote our energies to acquisition, but must also recognize the need to foster commercial agriculture on each and every parcel in a manner that is economically viable and environmentally sound.

DFA staff and the program's various stakeholders must work together to resolve some of the "growing pains" experienced by the program in recent years. The program must continue to preserve the best farmland, so that viable farm businesses can thrive in Massachusetts. To do this, the program must be flexible enough to evolve as agriculture evolves, yet solid enough to forever protect resources that are diminishing every day! It's a challenge that will need to include everyone as we seek to establish policies toward an important goal.

I ask for the support of every stakeholder involved in this most successful program: let's work together to ensure that the critical next 25 years is just as successful in supporting the long-term stability of family farms as the first 25 years of APR has proven. I celebrate those accomplishments that you have all been a part of, and I look forward to facing the challenges ahead. ♦

CLASSIFIED

For Sale: Agrilink baled hay basket. Like new. \$1800. 508-886-4512.

Assistant Farm Manager for organic farm/vocational program for homeless. 25 weeks position, \$500 per week salary. Send resume and cover letter to: Jean-Claude Bourrut, Long Island Shelter, P.O. Box 158, Boston, MA 02122. 617-534-2526 x304. Jcbourrut@bphc.org

Learn to grow organic produce on a commercial scale by interning at Red Fire Farm in Granby in 2003. Also seeking a harvest manager. Contact Ryan at 413-467-SOIL or redfirefarm@juno.com

Approx. 2000 square feet of organic greenhouse space is available to rent in Montague, MA. Half an acre of outdoor field also available. More information at 413-467-7645

Llamas for sale: 2 neutered males and 1 breedable female with great fiber, \$3000 takes all. Contact Diane at 413-436-7821.

Farmland wanted to lease: professional man interested in leasing 5-10 acres of tillable land to grow market vegetables. Housing required. Prefer outbuilding for equipment storage and access to utilities (water, electricity). Willing to pay reasonable rate for decent quality land. Call 413-256-1178 or nhayes444@aol.com.

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Ford Model 1910, 4wheel drive with loader, 28hp, new tires. Great working tractor for small livestock farm or nursery business. \$10,500, 508-892-9201.

We will help Massachusetts farmers with a free help-wanted ad in The Caretaker Gazette. We have Massachusetts subscribers who want to work on your farm. Contact: THE Caretaker Gazette, PO Box 540, River Falls, WI 54022 715-426-5500, www.caretaker.org

Need some advice? On The Farm, "Problem-Solving for the Small Farm", is a consulting company, which can provide advice on the care, feeding, and management of livestock raised in a rural or suburban setting, for fun or profit. We will visit your site and help you devise an animal-management plan, which is tailored to your setting and your goals. For a free brochure, contact Bill Graves at 413-369-4679 or Bob Duby at 413-548-9404, or e-mail us at offarm@hotmail.com.

Subscribe to the New England Farm Bulletin. \$17/year includes 2 free farm classifieds or \$17 in free information booklets, monthly publication, annual almanac, New England fairs and farmers' market directory, monthly farm classifieds and features, access to rare farm topics and more! NEFB, Dept. MA, PO Box 67, Taunton, MA 02780.

How to Place a Classified Ad

Classified ads are accepted free-of charge on a first-come basis. Limit: 25 words. Be sure to include a phone number. No display ads will be accepted. Only one ad per business/individual per issue, unless space permits. Ads may run in consecutive issues, space permitting.

Ads must be of interest to Massachusetts farmers. The Mass. Dept. of Food and Agriculture reserves the right to refuse any listing it deems inappropriate for publication.

Send typewritten or neatly printed copy to: Farm & Market Report, Mass. Dept. of Food and Agriculture, 251 Causeway Street, Suite 500, Boston, MA 02114, 617-626-1752 fax: 617-626-1850, e-mail: Diane.Baedecker@state.ma.us

Get the Farm & Market Report by e-mail and stay up to date!

Budget constraints may make it necessary to change or delay the printed Farm & Market Report schedule without notice. To make sure you stay in touch, sign up for our e-mail list. Send a message to Diane.Baedecker@state.ma.us with your name, address and phone number.



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This publication is available in alternate formats upon request.

SAVE THE DATE... N.E. Products Trade Show

The 19th annual New England Products Trade Show (NEPTS) is planned for March 9-11, 2003 in Portland, Maine. This juried wholesale buyers trade show is a premier event featuring only New England made giftware, home furnishings, and gourmet specialty foods, as well as complementing vendor services. More than 300 companies of all sizes participate in this nationally known event which draws more than 2,000 buyers from across the country and beyond. This unique wholesale event is known for its friendly atmosphere and quality products. For exhibitor, sponsor, or buyer information, please contact Giraffe Events at 800-638-6787 or info@giraffeevents.com. Visit the show web site at www.nepts.com to register today!

calendar 2003

January 7 - New England Vegetable and Berry Growers Assoc. All Day Meeting at the Sturbridge Host Hotel, Route 20, Sturbridge. Registration 9:30 am. Held in conjunction with the New England Tree Fruit Meeting. Includes a trade show.

January 21 - Winter Flower Growers' Meeting, 9:30 am – 4:00 pm at FAF Growers, Hinsdale Rd., Northfield, Mass. Co-sponsored by UMass Extension Floriculture Program and the Mass. Flower Growers' Assoc. Contact: Tina Smith 413-545-5306, tsmith@umext.umass.edu, Paul Lopes 508-295-2212 ext 24, lopes@umext.umass.edu or Bob Luczai, 781-275-4811.

January 25 - 16th Annual Winter Organic Conference and Annual Meeting, sponsored by the Northeast Organic Farmers Assoc./Massachusetts chapter at the Quabbin Regional High School in Barre, Mass. Contact Edwin McGlew, 413-247-9264, emcglew@pssci.umass.edu.

February 3-10 - North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Conference and Trade Show, Charlotte, NC. See page 3 for more information. Contact Jonathan Bates, 413-529-0386, nafdma@map.com, www.nafdma.com.

February 6 - International Cider Contest sponsored by the North American Farmers Direct Marketing Association, in Charlotte, NC. See page 3 for more information. Contact NAFDMA at 413-529-0386 or visit www.nafdma.com.

March 9-11 - New England Products Trade Show, Portland, ME. Contact Giraffe Events at 800-638-6787, info@giraffeevents.com or visit www.nepts.com.

March 12-13 - 3rd annual New England Farmers' Direct Marketing Conference & Trade Show, Holiday Inn Boxborough Woods, Boxborough, Mass. Contact: Charlie Touchette, 413-529-9100, or e-mail info@massfarmstands.com.

March 15-23 - New England Spring Flower Show at the Bayside Expo Center, Boston. Sponsored by the Mass. Horticultural Society, www.masshort.org.

April 1 - Agriculture Day at the State House. Details in the next issue of the Farm & Market Report. Contact Mary Jordan, 617-626-1750, Mary.Jordan@state.ma.us.

Winter Organic Conference Slated

The Northeast Organic Farming Association of Massachusetts (NOFA/Mass) will hold its 16th Annual Winter Conference on Saturday, January 25th at the Quabbin Regional High School in Barre, Mass.

The conference features over 40 workshops, covering a multitude of topics including hands-on activities, growing techniques for growers of all abilities, workshops on livestock production, homesteading, genetic engineering, and more. A potluck lunch, exhibits, a farmers' market, raffle and children's program are also planned.

Contact Elaine Peterson, 978-928-4707, e-mail nofamass@massorganic.org, or visit www.massorganic.org. ♦